

Date: June 23, 2004

To: Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Government Reform

From: Sheriff Danny Hickman
Boone County Sheriff's Office
400 East Prospect
Harrison, Arkansas 72601
(870) 741-8404

Ref: Methamphetamine Epidemic in Arkansas

Dear Sir:

I would like to thank you for asking me to testify in this hearing regarding the methamphetamine problem in Arkansas. I feel that this hearing will give you some insight on the methamphetamine epidemic within our area and throughout the State of Arkansas. I also feel that this is a privilege and an honor to be able to speak to you about this problem.

To give you an overall view of our geographical location, Boone County, Arkansas is located in the general Northwest area of Arkansas and the county seat is Harrison, Arkansas. Boone County borders Taney County, Missouri which is the home to Branson, Missouri. Boone County has a population of approximately 35, 000 and is the economic hub for the surrounding counties as well as, a main thorough-fare for Branson and the Buffalo National River. Although, the growth of Boone County is steady and progressive, the "Home town" atmosphere is still present.

One of the major problems that have tainted Boone County and surrounding counties is the methamphetamine epidemic. We hear the uses of methamphetamine everyday and track the individuals who purchase precursors of methamphetamine on a daily basis. We have seen the violent nature of individuals who have been under the influence of methamphetamine and how it has destroyed families. Our narcotics case load, which includes our 14th Judicial Drug Task Force, has had a 50% increase every year for the past five years related to the Methamphetamine problem.

To combat this problem, I have held several classes throughout Boone County, to help educate the concerned citizens and business leaders within our community. I believe in education and have sent several Criminal Investigators that have become Methamphetamine Lab Certified. This certification has trained these Investigators on the detection and the proper disposal of these hazardous sights. In addition, I have sent the same Investigators to C.S.I. (Crime Scene Investigation) School. This school is a six (6) month school held by the Criminal Justice Institute and has aided tremendously in the investigative processing stages at the lab sights. I have also sent two (2) Officers to the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy. This school not only provided the Officers with excellent management and investigative practices, it opened a door to network with other officers across the world. I believe that with education and

networking, those problems such as the methamphetamine epidemic, is a solution to the problem that can be met.

Some of the solutions that have been discussed are the “blister pack” pseudoephedrine purchases. The blister packs are only a container to the problem. All containers that have pseudoephedrine should be considered. A possible solution is to continue with the limited amount that maybe purchased and to have the individual sign for the pseudoephedrine purchase as a legal means to collect this data from local businesses. By monitoring the purchases of pseudoephedrine, which is the essential ingredient in the manufacture of methamphetamine. Monitoring can be a deterrent for individuals making purchases of pseudoephedrine intended for manufacturing methamphetamine. This will assist law enforcement agencies that will have information identifying potential suspects that which would aid in combating the epidemic.

I look forward in discussing these issues and answering any questions that you may have.

Respectfully,

Danny Hickman
Boone County Sheriff